

THE
RULE
OF
CHARITY:

By H. W. Gent.

Very Warm

Licensed according to Order.

L O N D O N,

Printed for the Author, in the Year,
MDCXCIII.

THE
J. I. J. J.

AT
THE

OF
J. I. J. J.

THE
J. I. J. J.

TO THE
HONOURABLE

And much Esteemed

Madam Taylor

Madam

Religion being not that
Melancholy Piece,
that Obligeth us to be-
come Unsociable, and Ene-
mies to all that hath any de-
ference to Chearfulness &
Plenty; but rather Instru-
cteth

997306^A

The Epistle

Teach us, how to make use of
Both, so as we may best enjoy
our Selves, and benefit Others:
I hope that inherent Goodness,
which hath rendred you so
Remarkable for your Cha-
rity, will not refuse Her now
Your Refuge, when by Your
Noble Dispositions she is En-
courag'd, not only to pretend
to, but confidently Plead a just
Title to your Patronage.

'Tis true, the Receders
from this Duty, neither re-
gard her Rule, nor own her
Practice, but are afraid of
all

Dedicatory.

all that carries the Face of Love, and true Munificence; and are only Valiant in breaking those holy Laws, which Heaven hath made Eternal: That would have no such Images of God in the World, as the Distressed; and seem to believe, Liberality, at best, but a Romish Superstition.

But let these, I say, do Right to Julian the Apostate, and Confess, it was no Asperision thrown upon our Religion, when he gave out,

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The Epistle

there was nothing in it beyond a Mode of Believing, that will not allow her Sacred Sanction, nor submit to the Rule of Charity; but had rather acknowledge Her a Popish, or an Italian Virtue, than have Her Naturaliz'd here, to the Prejudice of the Exchequer.

This part of it, that is here presented, is but the Imperfect Effigie of the Precept, perform'd by one that is at present, render'd by his ill Circumstances, too great a Depen-

Dedictory.

Dependent on its Mandates.

I know You would even dote upon the Piece, were it well Drawn, because it is impossible, for Right-Reason, to resist the Charms of Truth and Love, Painted in good Colours to the full Proportion.

My Ambition, at present, extends but to Your Pardon, not to Your Esteem; and it is my Request, that where it cannot be admitted as a Counsel, it may serve for an Admonition: Hoping you will have the same Veneration

The Epistle

ration for the Vertue, and not look upon Her as the less a Beauty, because I have shew'd Her in so mean a Habit.

Charity takes most delight in her Self, when she goes Plainest, and is in a Dress of Condescension; affecting no Garbe so Little, as that of a Great Fortune.

*If you discern Imperfections in the Copy, let not Charity for my Sake, fall under an Imputation; That needs no such Advocate as I am, nor
such*

Dedicatory:

*such a Common Pen, but one
from an Angels Wing, to
advance Her Esteem.*

*There is a Beauty in Ho-
liness, exceeding that of
State; and a Glory in Hu-
mility, Superior to the proud
Inscript of Monarchs: Both
of these wait upon Charity,
and are the proper Orna-
ments of Her Profession.*

*But here the known Antipa-
thy which such as You visibly
Bare to the disregards of
this Duty, diverts my for-
ward Pen, believing it not
Perti-*

The Epistle, &c.

*Pertinent to be too Nice in
my Description of that, which
bath been already so excel-
lently well expressed in your
Life and Conversation.*

*The Consideration of which,
obliges me to an unwilling
Silence, by Humbly taking
leave to Subscribe my Self,*

Your Honours

Most Faithful and most
Devoted Servant to

Command,

Henry Waring.

THE Rule of Charity.

IF an Author's Place or Degree that he holdeth, can add Vertue to Words, or serve to procure Attention, the Crown of *Solomon* will oblige you to hear a King newly become a Preacher: (The Richest Monarch that ever Reign'd in *Jerusalem*, and the Wisest of Eastern Sophies, steps from the Throne of *David*, to the Chair of *Moses*, and Teacheth us,) *Eccles. 11. 4. Cast thy Bread upon the Water, and after many days thou shalt find it.* This is not an ordinary Rule of Humane Policy, but the Doctrine of true Religion, by which Men are best Govern'd. Commentators agree, That these words of the Preacher, [*Cast thy Bread upon the Water,*] exhort us to the Relief of all such as are Distress'd; which the Verse following doth Illustrate: But

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when they come to expound the single words of that Text, they differ: A few say [*Cast thy Bread*] that is, The substance or matter whereof Bread is made [*upon the Water,*] that is, a fruitful Soil, [*and thou shalt find it,*] that is, Reap it again, [*after many days,*] that is, In time of Harvest; these make the Precept of *Charity* to become an *Allegory*. Let us rather say, *These Alms we bestow, are as Seed dispersed, and the Poor Receivers a Soyl so Fertile, that daily bestowing our Charity, we sow with a large Hand, not without assurance of receiving an ample Return of Eternal Rewards.* This Exposition is the plainest, only this acceptance of the word [*Bread*] seems harsh and unusual; yet we shall find that *Bread* may be taken for *Alms*, while we converse with the *Hebrews* the Original לֶחֶם; *Lehem*, which we commonly Translate *Bread*, is taken in the Scripture for all sorts of Provision; in that sense you may read it, *Deut. 8. 3. Lehem* signifies the flesh of Beasts Sacrificed, *Levit. 3. 11.* It is used for the Fruit of Trees, *Jer. 11. 19.*

Lehem

Lehem is also taken for the Fodder of Cattle, *Psal.* 14. 7, 9. because the *Hebrew* Language consisteth of few Words, so that every word beareth many significations; which is the reason that *Lehem* (among the *Jews*) did sometimes import all manner of Subsistence, every thing that Man or Beast used to live upon; in which sence it is taken in the *Pater Noster*, when we pray for **Daily Bread**, and in a larger Extent there, implying not only the Necessaries of our Body, but also, that Angels food, (that ἡμῶν καὶ ἀγγέλων, *Luke* 13. 3.) the **Blessed Sacrament**, by which our Souls are nourisht for *Eternity*: But most Divines understand the word *Bread*, in the *Grammatical* Sence, placing the Figure in the word *Waters*, which carries divers Interpretations: Some Authors will have these words of *Solomon*, recommend to us, *Giving of Alms at all adventure, without having an Eye to the recompence of Reward*: As if we were advised to cast our *Bread* upon those rowling and inconstant *Waves*, that will sooner float away with

our *Estates*, than return us (in this or the next Life) a laudable *Cargo*. But the Best and Wifest, deliver the words in a contrary Sence, which is indeed most *Catholick*, or *Universal*; affirming, To cast our *Bread* (or *Charity*) upon *Solomon's Waters*, is the safest and speediest way to Merchandize and Trade with Heaven; where, in exchange for some small tokens of Christian Love, and cheap instances of Compassion, we shall receive secret Assurances in this Life of future Mercy, attended with publick Blessings; and, in the next, an Eternal Weight of Glory. Either such another Fish as came to discharge the Tax for *Christ*, and *St. Peter*, shall repay our Bounty into our Bosom, or some *Dolphin* shall make good our Adventure: That *Bread* you so graciously bestow, shall not fail to be returned with Advantage, as the Ring of *St. Arnold*, in the Legend; or that of *Polycratus*, in *Herodotus*. The Fathers of the Church further ingage us to bestow our *Bread*, or works of Mercy, with *Waters*, that is, our *Alms* moisten-

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ed with tears of *Pity*; as if a liberal hand in the *Donor*, should be prompted to give, by the secret Motions of the Bowels of *Compassion*; and that the Sluces of *Grief* should remain open, to render the *Charity* Perfect.

Some would have the *Waters* here, signifie distressed Merchants, poor Seamen, and Passengers, that in their way of living, are compelled to struggle with an Ocean of Danger; so much indeed the word carries, and more; for by *Waters*, all infirm and decayed Persons, all people of the meanest Condition are signified, [*Apocalyp.* 17. 15.] such as creep into their Graves in Silence, that come and go without notice, that pass away from this World without any noise of Revenge, or pomp of Ceremonious Lamentation. The vulgar, the most common sort of Men, are denoted by the word *Waters*, because they are very dangerous in their Use and Excesses, unsettled in their Condition, always rowling this way and t'other; their Temper is Weak, their Motions Irregular, always

in Perturbation; every Hurricane of State, Wind of false Doctrine, Tempest of Fears and Jealousies, transports and hurries them hither and thither, so as they can remain at no certainty. The Poet made such a Remark upon them, and hath suited the Epithet of *Moveable*, to their Inconstancy (*Mobile vulgus*,) whose humour and departure the *Royal Prophet* so well understood, that he thought he could compare the raging of the Sea, to nothing more properly, than to the Madness of the People. So when he telleth us, *The Waves of the Sea are gone over his Head, and entred into his Soul*, Psal. 69. he meaneth, the Insolencies of the Rabble; for it exceedingly troubled *David*, to see the common People so prone to *Rebellion*. The first *English* Bibles of *Tyndal* and *Erasmus* have it, [*Lay thy Bread upon wet Faces*,] that is, upon all People in a Mourning condition, that water their Couches with their Tears, and appear lamentable Objects of your Pity and Compassion. *St. Jerom* alone Interprets the words in this manner,

[*Cast*

[*Cast thy Bread,*] that is, place the Word of God [*upon the Waters,*] that is, *Penitent Souls*; intimating, that you are not to give your wholesome Doctrine of Salvation, to such as will have you in Derision. Such another Caution as that, is offered us, *Eccles. 32. 4. Not to be wise unseasonably,* (*μη ἀναισχρος σοφίζεσθαι,*) for so shall we lose the good Seed of Christian Admonitions and Reproofs, upon Hearts obdurate and impenitent. 'Tis a breach of that Precept, *Mat. 7. To cast Pearls before Swine,* by offering a *Creed* to those that are ready to throw Contempt upon the Gospel. The *English* word [*Cast*] in the two famous Translations of the *Greek* and *Latin* Churches, is the same with *Sow, Send, or Scatter*: The Truth is, the first *English* Translators were no very good Linguists, but made an easie mistake of the Letter *Caph* for *Cheth*, [כ for ח] whereas the Original Word is *Shallah*, [שלה] they Construed it as *Shallach*, [שלך] making a notorious difference in signification; for the latter imports Deliberation and Judgment, the former Pro-

fulness in giving; the one sounds as if we never could bestow too much; the other, that a Man as soon giveth too much, as too little: These Interpretations do well together, and so long as they afford us divers excellent Rules of Practice, we may admit both as Orthodox. All objects of *Charity* are here design'd by the Word *Waters*; that is, the several parts of Mankind, all such as appear Poor, Infirm, or any way Miserable; Captives and Gally-slaves, Exiles, decayed Merchants or Tradesmen, distressed Passengers, Scholars not preferr'd, impoverish'd House-keepers, that through too much Trust, and too many bad Debts, are forc'd into Sanctuary; Widows and Orphans, that are left Friendless, and Desolate; Sick or Maimed Labourers, Hungry Travellers, and Weeping Penitent Strangers, and all that are destitute of Friends and Comfort, that with dejected Countenances implore your Pity. The World affords us such Variety of sad Objects, that the Writer might turn his Catalogue into a Volume: Some want Advice,

Advice, some Law, some Religion, some Friends, some Medicines; yes, and so numerous are humane Wants and Imperfections, that I want Room and Leisure to express the Number of such as are Commissioned by Heaven, to receive your Charity; yet all come here under the Name and Notion of *Waters*: Is it not pity, to see the lean and naked Cripple, that hath a Stomach to desire Bread, but wanteth Hands to receive it? or, that Blind *Lazar*, deprived of Eyes, wherewith he might behold his own Nakedness? or, the Man that is rob'd of his Taste and Feeling, by icy Distempers, or grievous Casualties? Have you never beheld the treacherous Limbs of some People, rotting away before their Faces? Some have their Spirits so darkned, they misguide themselves, while Reason hath lost the right use of her Organs; others sadly want common Sense, to distinguish the Food that is Safe, from that which is Unwholesome; shewing us where Nature will leave us, when we are forsaken by Heaven.

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There remains yet another Query, raised from these words of *Solomon*, (*Cast thy Bread upon the Waters,*) Whether the Royal Preacher did intend them for a Precept, or a Counsel? The One doth absolutely oblige, the Other recommends a matter of Practice. If a Precept, the Words must be included in the Moral Law, and universally bind all Persons of Ability. Were it no more than sound Advice, some Men only should observe it, in some Cases; but take it (as it is) for a part of that Eternal Law of Nature, (which ought to influence all Mankind, I might have said, all Creatures,) What living thing is there in the World, that doth not communicate some benefit to its Fellows? and by consequence, sheweth its self loving and serviceable to the other parts of the Creation. And shall Man alone degenerate? Shall he that is Master of Reason, shew himself a Beast to his Companions, whilst the most irrational part of the Universe teacheth him the way to be Charitable? Let him not know, how to prove unkind to his
Fellows,

Fellows, that cannot but know how much he hath received from our good Master.

You may prove *Solomon's* words a part of the Law of Nature, by those indelible Characters of the *Soul*, that exert their Powers in the Practice of *Pagans*. We find among those People, that are yet in the shadow, positive Rules of *doing Good*, both to their own, and to Strangers; which not deriving themselves from the Edicts of Divine Revelation, must be ascribed to the provident Dictates of Nature.

But we may better prove *Alms* a Duty, from the express Reason of Holy Scripture; wherein *Uncharitableness* is considered as a grievous Sin, because it is inconsistent with the Love of *God*, and directly contradicts the meaning of Divine Precepts.

That most eminent *Seer* puts the Question, 1 *Joh.* 3. 17. *He that seeth his Brother in want, and shutteth up his Bowels of Compassion from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him?* The Query there
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(as in several other places in the *Bible*,) is put for a vehement *Negative*, and imports, that in obdurate Hearts, the Love of *God* cannot be Resident. The Prayers of *Uncharitable* People are not answered; for *God* giveth us, because he perceives us free to give, and forgive others. *He that stoppeth his Ears at the Cries of the Poor, shall cry himself, and not be heard,* was a Proverb in *Jury*, and continues a great Truth all the World over, (*Prov. 21. 13.*) for so *God* delights to retaliate with his Creatures.

Want of Love (in us,) occasions our Wants, and bespeaks Unhappiness for us in this Life; and in the next, Everlasting Perdition. There is not another Sin charg'd upon Damn'd *Dives*, besides his want of *Charity*; and those Wretches that are mentioned in *St. Matth. 25.* were condemned only for their unkindness to the Brethren, and their gross defects in the visible part of this Duty.

You would ask, In what part of the *Decalogue*, the Rule of *Charity* is contain'd? *Bellarmino* following *Aquinas*,
refers

refers it to the *Fifth Commandment*, which includes all Rights appertaining to Superiours, Equals, and Inferiours; and of this last Sort, the Poor are Principals: And of all Duties belonging to the Poor, *Alms* is most considerable; and there is scarce any thing that we are oblig'd to do for them, but comes within the Precincts of *Charity*.

Other Authors derive this Duty from the *Eighth Commandment*, and will have *Robbery* to be but one and the same thing with *Uncharitableness*; affirming, That he that is able to Give, and withholds his *Alms* from those that Want, and call for his Relief, Robs his poor Neighbour of his just Comfort, and *God* of his Honour. Therefore the Phrase is changed, *St. Luk. 16. 9.* and *Solomon's* Precept become an Evangelical Law; where it is not left at our choice to do good, but we are charged to make us *Friends with the Mammon of Unrighteousness*. 'Tis call'd *Unrighteous Mammon*, saith *St. Austin*, not only when it is unjustly acquir'd, but also, while it is Uncharitably detain'd from

from those that are Necessitated. Is it commendable that I live in superfluous manner; while my poor Brother wanteth to suffice Nature? Sure it is a wrong to withhold from the Poor what I can easily spare, in their Affliction and Extremity. *Superflua Diviti necessaria sunt Pauperi, aliena retinet qui ista tenet.* Augustin saith, *The Rich Man's Exceedings, are the Poor Man's Portion*; so as he unjustly seems to Defraud others, that reserves to himself more than is sufficient.

St. Ambrose, in a rougher Dialect affirms, *It is no less Criminal, for Rich Persons to deny Necessitated People Relief, than to take from them that they have, and use violence to the Laws of Property.* Yes, and some proceed further, reducing these words of Solomon to the Sixth Commandment; making Uncharitable Men no better than Thieves and Murderers; agreeable to that of Eccles. 34. 21. *The Bread of the Needy is their Life; he that defraudeth them thereof is a Man of Blood.* So that we see, to detain necessary Provision from them that Want, is to shorten

ten the lives of Poor Men; and, as much as in us lies, to deprive him of Succession, is to famish our afflicted Neighbour, (the sharpest of all Deaths) and in him to seek to murther his Posterity.

You hear how this Edict of *Alms*, has been referred to *Three* of the *Ten Commandments*, yet more properly belongs to the *Second Table*, referring to the general Law of our Neighbour; which Law (as St. *John* expounds it, *cap. 3. 18.*) consists not in *Words alone*, but in *Truth, and real Testimonies of Affection*. Who shall believe we love indeed, without apparent Works of *Love* and *Charity*? The Scripture teacheth us a Method of doing Mercy, (τὸ ποιεῖν ἐλεῶν,) not talking of it only; for then are acts of *Charity* best perform'd, when fewest words are made of the *Benevolence*: Giving of *Alms*, is at one and the same time, to Love God, and Honour Him in his Image; to make a Friend, and to Relieve a Neighbour.

Our Blessed Saviour calleth it, *An evil Generation, who demanded a sign of their Redemption*: And we cannot Repute it a better,

better, that ask, *Where is the Mandate for well-doing?* A small excuse Men are willing to make use of, to save their Estates; and where the Commandment is Positive, they seek for their own sakes (more than their Neighbour's,) to dwindle the Precept into a Counsel: Yet is this more than a meer matter of Advice; for it is a Breviate of what our dear Master left us in Charge, at his Ascension; viz. *That we Love one another*; which Love admits of no proof inferior to that of *Almsgiving*.

Holy Writ, and all the *Tomes* of the Fathers, abound with Exhortations to this Duty: But this is added to poor Mens Miseries; they now live in a cold Age of the World, and here in a very chill Climate. 'Tis a wonder to hear Men, every where, boast of *Faith* without *Mercy*, and when they shew no fruits of a living *Faith*, still do boast of *Godliness*: For (*Charitate ipsâ, nihil Charius,*) Love and its Effects, are some of our greatest Rareties.

When

When we speak of Christians, none can be mistaken, where we find *Charity*, but the Giver, and he not easily. But admitting he may loose part of his Reward, by valuing his Gift at too great a Rate, or by wronging himself, by the manner of giving; we have a great assurance, that he that pretends to *Faith*, without *Works*, deceives himself, and the whole World, and offers to put a Cheat upon his Master; for he doth undervalue, at one and the same time, his Afflicted Brethren, and the Truth of Divine Promises.

Some tell us of three sorts of *Commandments*, that occur in Scripture, *Affirmative*, *Negative*, and *Mixt*: The Decalogue consists of such as are mostly *Negative*, though some of them are *Affirmative*; As, *Keep Holy the Sabbath: Honour thy Parents, &c.* And more of that sort we have in the *Bible*; as *Mourn for thy Sins; Shew Mercy; Do Penance, &c.* There are also *Commandments* of a mixt Nature, as of *Restoration*, and *Forgiveness*, &c. A negative Commandment

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doth oblige all Persons at all Times, every where, and Eternally: *Affirmative* Precepts are binding for ever, but not in all Times, nor in all Places; *Mixt Commandments* oblige us at all Times, and in all Places; but not always.

I shall not determine to which of these Sorts the Words of *Solomon* may best be reduc'd; but am certain they oblige all Persons of Ability, to conferr *Benefits*, and Pay *good Offices*, according to their Power, to all Persons, without Excuse or Exemption, that entreat their Assistance.

Cast thy Bread upon the Waters.] We read it *Cast* in our Common *English-Bibles*; intimating, That if we are oblig'd to *cast* or *scatter* our *Charity*, we ought not to be very curious in Examining every Circumstance concerning our *Gift*, and the Condition of the Receiver; but we should give frequently, and liberally, without an excessive Care to whom, or to what purpose our *Donative* is bestow'd: It is enough that we know our own Intentions to be Warrantable, with-

without searching too strictly into the Meaning or Appetite of the Petitioner : Let us not be too scrupulous in seeking a very fit Object, to make the best use of what we bestow ; lest such a severe Examination should obstruct our *Charity* : 'Tis lawful to enquire, but not with too much Curiosity, how the Receiver became poor ; but if he have failed in Diligence to Live, let us not fail, in his Support, for to supply his present Want, which is the way to Encourage him to be diligent for the future : Never let the despicable Circumstances of any Person in Despair, or any manner of Affliction, divert thy Bounty ; It is a Niceness God cannot approve, who dispenceth many Mercies to thee, where few are deserved.

But if we take it according to that other Reading, and Translate for the word *Cast*, or *Scatter* ; *Send*, or *Sow* ; it implies Caution, and addeth an Act of *Prudence* to that of *Charity* : Then it will import a Care and Art in giving, as well as in Enjoyment. Where *Solomon*

directs us to send our *Charity*, he does intend we should give *Alms* with Discretion, and to be Cautious in dispensing our Bounty. *Alms* is a sort of Merchandice that we Barter with Heaven, and which we ought to send with Circumspection, that they may not miscarry. 'Tis no wise Man's way to be Careless of what he sendeth, but he commits it to the surest Hands, that it may be safely conveyed to the Owner: A small Token, a Ring, or a Letter, is not trusted with every idle Fellow that is of small Trust, or no good Reputation; but we make it our Business, to know from whence the Messenger cometh, and whether he designs to Travel, that taketh charge of our meanest Presents. The *Wise-man* here adviseth us to the same Method; so to send our *Alms* in the safest Bottoms, and by God's usual Messengers, that they may be safely deliver'd; not suffering our Contributions to Perish, or strengthen the Hand of the Evil Doer: We must not give with a Design to promote evil Counsels, ill Practices, or bad Com-

Company ; least of all, must we give to further Lascivious Courses, or multiply Places of Debauchery : To do this, is not giving *Alms*, but a joyning of Forces against Heaven, to augment the Revenues of the Riotous, whose great work is to maintain Brothels, or repair Houses of Licentious Entertainment ; where *Christ* hath no Habitation ; such Benevolence is prejudicial to the Rule, and to the Reward of *Charity*.

[*Send thy Bread ;*] Sending implies a Communication of the Good Things that are in our Power, to such as live at a Distance, as well as to the Neighbourhood : Let us do good abroad, for that argueth true Devotion at home ; not to give only so far as our Hand can extend, but as far as our Gift can be transported by the Hands of Others. The *Household of Faith* is first to be consider'd and reliev'd, and what remains is the Portion of distressed Strangers, and Unbelievers. I wish I could truly say, *England* had not as much need of this Doctrine, as any Nation ; I think we have

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been

been so far from approving our selves Charitable to Strangers, that we scarce afford them Civil usage. Let us no more pretend to *Science* and *Reformation*, until we cease to be Barbarous, and have learn'd Humanity: What if they be Remote? What if they be *Jews*? What if they be *Turks*? What if they be *Pagans*? we must not excuse our selves, by pleading Ignorance of their Lineage, their Principles, or their Country; 'tis enough that we know their unfortunate Condition. *Send*, is an *Imperative word*, that leaveth not the Thing Indifferent, or at our Election; but chargeth us to *give Alms*, and *to do Good*, according to our Ability, without making abatement for want of Merit in the Receiver; or for the sake of the strong Aversion we bear to his Person, or to his Religion. The word *Send*, declares it a Duty incumbent, expressly commanding us to *show Mercy*, without Excuses, and without Delay: If you neglect to bestow what you can well Spare, 'tis at worst an Act of Injustice; at best, a Detinue.

Send

Send your Charity where you cannot go, for fear of Corporal Danger, or Defamation: It is infamous for some Personally to give to some People; there you must send your Charity, where your going to carry it, would bring upon you a Scandal: Shorten not your Hand of Succour from the poor Prisoner, that's almost pine'd and smother'd in a noysom Dungeon. Send your Bounty to the Sick, that are going to their *Graves* with some Infectious Disease: You may safely send it, when you cannot go with safety. Yes, and there are some Cases, wherein the *good Christian* must hazard *Reputation* and *Life* to perform *good Offices*; that is, where *God* or *Nature*, his *Religion* or *Country*, are most nearly Concern'd: Here it is he must Advance against all Dangers, Struggle with all Adversities, & encounter with evil Beasts, as *S. Paul* did at *Ephesus*: We must fight on such great Occasions, an whole Army of *Scandals*; there we must not matter Obloquy, but oppose our selves to the Tyrannies of *State*, and stand the unwhole-

some Censures of the Insolent and ungrateful Multitude. There are Evangelical Counsels that have the same Influence over *good Men*, as if they carried with them the Nature and Force of a Commandment, But these words of *Solomon* are a *positive Law*, which, not only Invites us to, but Prescribes us *Obedience*. The Neglect or Omission, to observe those Counsels, we read in the *Gospel*; as, *single Life, voluntary Poverty, &c.* are but Imperfections in our Nature; whereas the Breach of this Law of *Charity*, is a plain Sin, a complicated Sin; and of that sort, that renders the Sinner odious in the highest Degree; because there is more comprehended in this Law of *Love*, than in all other Laws, Divine and Humane; for Love is the Life and End of Laws, and this one is the Accomplishment of the *Ten Commandments*. There is nothing enjoyn'd by the *Church*, for Defects in *Alms-giving*, because there it is that God reserveth the Sentence to Himself, and punisheth the failure in that Duty, with more than the Church is willing

willing to declare: Only God hath been pleas'd to Reveal how far *good Works* are acceptable to him, and what Happiness *they* will procure for us hereafter, that He may see how far we are willing to proceed in our Clarity, for the sake of Divine Love, and for an Eternal Reward. Send your *Alms* therefore as far as *Paul* or *Silas*, Camels, or Ships will carry them; from *Rome* to *Macedon*, or *Antioch*; or from the Place of your Residence, to *Jerusalem* or *Hungary*: To this end we were indued with reasonable Faculties, with the Comforts of this Life, and all those Temporal Blessings that are reacht within the Complicated Name of an *Estate*; that we might Honour our *God* in Compliance with his *holy Will*; and that we might enjoy and benefit our selves and others.

[*Send thy Bread.*] Bread is of excellent use, and large Extent; signifying all that is necessary for Man's Subsistence: All manner of Provision is included in that *Monosyllable*. The *Chaldee Dialect* expresseth a *Sumptuous Feast*, by the word

word *Bread*, delighting to set forth a large Bill of *Fare* in a few Letters, and with a single word, to furnish a Table more for Pleasure than Necessity. And this luxurious Sense, the word *Bread* carries, *Ecclesiastes* 10. 19. For which cause some inform us, the *Grecians* derived the word [*παν*] that signifies every Thing, and their God *Pan*, from *Panis*, that goeth for *Bread* among the *Latins*; neither is the Dearth of Flesh, Wine, or Oyls, but the want of Bread alone, styled a *Famine* in Scripture. Bread is termed the *Staff of Life*, that supports the *Feeble*, (*Psalms* 104.) And, *Fulness of Bread*, was ever reputed one of the greatest Blessings of the *Jewish Nation*; the Plenty thereof prevents Insurrections; for such as follow'd Christ, chiefly for the sake of the *Loaves*, and *Fishes*; more for the Miracles he wrought, to feed them, and heal them, than for the sake of his Prayers, or his Preaching. The Multitude, (I mean those that are ready to make their Belly their God,) are most Devout there, where they can find most
Bread,

Bread, and care not to embrace a Religion that commends *Fasting*; remove their Altars, set aside their Bishops, take away their Priests, and their Christ too, you provoke them not much, so as you leave them entire, their Wine and their Manchet. Our ordinary Prayer is for *daily Bread*, with which every one of us ought to rest contented, is the one thing necessary, if it be taken for our common Provision; but it is the *only thing necessary*, if taken as divers excellent Writers, and Dr. *Pearson* upon the *Creed*, Expounds it, *The Divine Food of our Souls, The Blessed Sacrament*. The *Roman Satyrift* knew how much the People valued *Bread*, while he informs us, they covet nothing above [*Panem & Circenses,*] Bread and Recreation; meaning by the First of the Two, *all necessary Provision*. [*Cast thy Bread;*] that is, thy Substance or Estate, thy Means of Living; or whatever a Man needeth: If it be dear to thee, it will be dearer to thy God; who when you esteem it not much, values it as little. He was no less
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than a Royal Divine, that useth this Expression, *Shall I give to God that which costeth me nothing?* The Poor are God's Receivers, and his Factors; if you have Ability to dispend much to them for his Service, and to send great things by their Hands, you shall be certain of ample Returns. That is not to be called *Charity*, but ridding of your House, to bestow some pitiful thing upon the Poor, that otherways to keep, would disparage their Master. How can Men expect their Reward to be great, where they place a matter of so small Merit? *Bread*, implies something that is good, and some-what in readiness; to shew you, that you are to Give with Expedition, that which may prove beneficial to the Petitioner: That which you bestow, ought to be wholesome, or advantageous, conducing to the Health or Profit of the Receiver: You are not so much to expect his Pleasure; though in some Cases of Despair or Sicknes, that is not altogether to be neglected. Let your *Bounty* be such as Nature requireth, rather than,

than a Banquet, or piece of Rarity.

Cast, or Send thy Bread; give the same in Substance or in Quality, with which Thou dost usually furnish thy own Table: So 'tis in the *Chaldee*, *Spare from thy own Mouth the Bread of thy Table*: For this end did the Church anciently appoint frequent Fasts, that the Provision which was spar'd by good Mens Abstinence, might supply the Wants of those that groan'd in Poverty.

Thus by feeding the Mouths of the Hungry, thou dost engage the Tongues of the needy Beads-man, to make Prayers and Intercessions for thee at the Throne of Mercy, praising God for thy sake, the Author of all Good to Mankind; and by their Importunate Petitions, *taking Heaven by violence*, and calling down Blessings upon thee and thy Family.

It was thus our Fore-Fathers; thus the first and best Christians Fasted, giving those Dishes of Meat to the Poor, which themselves should have eaten. But now, [*Terras astræa reliquit,*] Devotion is fled,
and

and too many, not only devour the Meat and Subsistence of the Poor, but the poor Men too; while any thing given to Charitable Uses is interpreted with a purpose to feast Parish-Officers. How many may we see Fatted daily with Varieties, and Surfeited with exceedings; serving the Poor with nothing, or that which their Dogs would refuse; delighting more in Foddering their Beasts, than Relieving their Hungry Brethren; and to feed Hogs, or Hounds, are Covetous to pine helpless Christians.

I hope in all this there is but little Reformation; to let the poor Man want Bread for his Family, while a Rich Esquire perhaps usurps the *Owners Living*; driving out poor *Christians* from their *own Habitations*, to keep Hawks, and Whores, and Hounds, in their Abodes: You cannot imagine it is this *Solomon* means, when he says, *Cast thy Bread upon the Waters*. Bread is a cheap and ready thing to bestow; you need not go far to procure such an Alms for the unfortunate Petitioner.

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This Imports that we must not serve the Poor with Delays; but make Dispatches in our Charity; because, what we are to give is ready; there is no occasion for us to go to *Bourdeaux* for Wines, or to *Virginia* for Smoak; or to fetch *Indian* Silks, or import *Persian* Tapestries, in order to perform Works of Mercy: Give your *Bread*, that is neither Dear to purchase, nor difficult to procure. What should they poor Hearts, that stand waiting for your Alms, do with useless Toys, or extravagant Curiositiés? 'tis no Charity to bestow a thing that is vain, or superfluous, tending more to Man's Admiration than Profit. You may Give and Debauch, as well as Give and Relieve; 'tis *Bread*, not Bottles of *Brumswick* or *Canary*, that are required; What is it you can more easily reach, or forgo? Yet is this *Bread* more acceptable to the hungry Soul, than *Ingots* of Gold in a Wilderness, or a Palace of Ivory. If the *Historian* did not take too much upon Trust, those *Ægyptian-Children* that were suckled by Goats, and not permitted

ted to hear any Humane Speech, were taught by Nature to pronounce the word *Bectos*, that signifies *Bread* in the *Coprick* Language: But if the Truth of this Report faileth, 'tis certain our Lamp of Life, [*Βίολοχviov*] by which we live, and move, and make such a Figure as we have, subsisteth not but by daily supplies of some proper Oily Nutriment: and Nature cannot be so far wanting to Her-self, and to Us, as not to seek and demand (after her own way) somewhat of Subsistence to preserve that Vital Flame from sinking in the Lamp, or in the Heart, its Receptacle; from a dark Extinction.

[*Cast thy Bread!*] The Bread thou givest must be thine; it ought to be stamped with the Character of *Property*; let it be thine by some known right, and indisputable Possession: Thine lawfully, not obtained by Fraud, or Violence. *He that grindeth the Face of the Poor, to feed an Hospital with the Bread of such Gettings: He that purveys, purloins, and pillers, and out of much, so gathered together,*

gether, thinks to distribute a little, bestowing now and then some small *Alms* for Ostentation, doth an iller thing, than the Man that stealeth a *Goose*, to stick a *Feather*: for, to lessen a Levy for the Poor, he puts a scorn upon all obligations of Nature; and to open himself a way to the Name of Riches, he forceth a breach in the Law of Nations; so promising to himself not to shew a Bounty, that shall exceed noise and appearance, he falleth under those Curses, that constantly Pursue Covetous and unjust Wretches. Not much inferior in doing wrong, is he, that oweth all he bestows, and meaneth not otherwise to discharge his Debts in this World, than by making God (by giving to the Poor) Trustee for balancing his present Account, and his Debtor, to make good his future Estate: This is not to be truly Charitable, out of his own, (as every Man ought to be,) but out of his Creditors Coffers; and seeming to be Zealous for God, he wrongeth his Friend that lends or forbears the Charity he makes bold

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to dispose : Nor is it a single Injury ; because in such acts, he doth prejudice to Human Society, that is best preserved by just and punctual Dealing : Have we not those among us, that by Wit and Deceit, live out one half of the year, exercising them both in Worldly matters ? and the other half, they wear out much in the same manner, with specious pretences of Law, and Religious Hypocrisie ; they walk with their Eyes lifted up to Heaven, and would have all others do so too, that they may not be able to discern the Lands and Tenements they have seized upon Earth, by the Arts of Oppression.

Such as can Usurp Lordships under a Pretext of Law, and take Sanctuary in a Church ; while they Rob the Hospital, shall they hope to expiate their Sins by some small Contributions ? or to escape the Torments of Hell, by leaving at their Death some small Legacy to the Poor of the Parish ? Their hopes are vain and dangerous, that hope by Building an Alms-house, to obtain a License from Heaven, for the Usurpation of a Lordship ;
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what is this, but to render our selves Slaves to the Prince of Darkness, and Enemies to good and honest Men, all our lives, only with hopes of serving *God* a little at our Death, and of doing some good, it may be an hour before our Funerals? Let all good Men rather believe, that Shame and Confusion, and horrid Spectres, attend the Tombs of such unjust Persons! and that the Houses, from which those miserable Wretches are convey'd (when Life and Sin forsakes them) shall be daily Besieg'd with the Cries of Widows and Orphans, and with the Curses of all those distressed Creatures that were undone, and made pitiful objects of Charity, by the power and Artifices of those Ill-livers, and that those Mansions of theirs (if there be left one Stone upon another) shall remain upon Earth, but as execrable Monuments of their Impiety. Supposing there were none of these, yet to deferr our Charity till Death, is to lose much of the commendation that is inseparable from holy Practices; because then it appears a work of Necessity, to

give that away, which we cannot longer possess: sure it is not a very Deserving matter, for me to pretend to relieve or gratify some Person with that thing, which refuseth any more to own me for its Master. Thus Divines love to speak, that they may quicken Charitable minds, to call down Blessings betimes upon themselves and their Posterity; to secure their Estates to their Issue, by giving Alms according to their Power; and that the best Christians may thereby feel and acknowledge the reward of good Works, before they change their Condition.

Send thy Bread.] Thou hast no Authority to dispose, (under the notion of thy own,) of the Bread of the circumvented Buyer, or the defrauded Labourer; least of all must you bestow the Shew-bread, or that which hath been Sacrilegiously taken from God's own Table; but send the Bread that is lawfully thine, by just Title and harmless Possession? if not thine by Inheritance, yet thine by Gift, Purchase, or Labour; thine by some honest way of Trading or Desert; thine
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by lawful Arts, or laudable Industry: Whosoever giveth Alms of ill gotten Goods doth worse than the Fellow that offer'd a Sow to *Pallas*: 'Tis a great affront that he doth to the Deity, offering to *GOD* that which is more loathsome to him than Swines Blood, the price of a Dog, or the hire of an Harlot, *He Killeth the Son, before the Father's Face*, says the Wisdom of *Sirach, Eccles. 34. 20.* *He Selleth Joseph his Brother, that he may carry home a Coat to his Seir.* I wish there were fewer of those Men in this Age, who being Honoured with the Blessing of a plentiful Estate, are yet Covetous to become the Executors of their poorest Neighbours; making daily Merchandice with the *Bezgar's-Penny*, selling the Sweat of the Labourers Brows, his single Beast, or little Cottage; and when they have given themselves Possession of all the small *Pittance* he has, they continue to force him into desperate Extremities. This is not to *Cast thy Bread upon the Waters*; but to

cast thy self backward, to Worship the *Tempter*, and gratifie him with thy Fall and Degradation.

'Tis no better, to cozen all the Week in the Shop, that you may give *Alms* on the Lord's Day; or to impoverish as many as possibly you can, in your whole Life, only to leave behind some small Relict of an Estate [*when you Die,*] either to Feast the Parish, or Repair the Church, or Adorn it, as some (not of the better sort of Christians) fancy'd they did, by placing a *Cheap Figure* of the Serpent upon the Steeple.

The Wicked Man's Legacy to the Poor, when this World will continue no longer with him, is no *Charity*, but a sort of Restitution; which cannot produce its proper Effect, because it is not performed to the right Party. Let that therefore be thine that thou givest away, that thy *Alms* may be more acceptable.

Cast thy Bread upon the Waters.]
We may understand by these *Waters*, all those that are most subject to *Tears*, the *Sick* and *Friendless*, and such as are any way

way brought into *Distress*: The *Stranger*, the *Widow*, and *Fatherless*, that go hand in hand, throughout the Scripture.

All those sad objects of *Pity*, that are not only sent into this World, to shew what the Lord is able to do, but also, what Flesh and Blood deserves to suffer, (and more than that, to make Experiment of what Men are willing to do for GOD, our great Benefactor) are sent hither to be *Receivers* of our *Charity*: You may read their *Errand* in their Faces, and their *Commission* in Scripture; where GOD passeth his Word for the Foundation of the Charitable Man's Merit; and gives His *Justice* and *Honour* to be *Security* for your *Repayment*: 'Tis this Infallible *Word of God*, upon which you put the *Adventure*; these *Waters* would deceive you, without that *Word's* Assurance: For, what *Recompence* can you expect from the meanest Abject, from such as are loaded with this World's Injuries, with Losses, or with Nature's Imperfections?

'Tis the way of many of those that

stand upon good Bottoms (as to this Life) to make use of the Times, and of all Expedients, to Advance or Secure their Fortunes, to Court those that are in high Places, and Flatter such as are in Authority; whereas GOD giveth us an Original of another nature, *Exalting the Humble, and Filling the Hungry, while the Rich are sent away Empty*; not out of Hatred to their Persons, but because He hath already conferred upon them extraordinary Favours, and rendred them (before) remarkable Objects of his Bounty; those *Waters* are Fluxive and Inconstant: Court the *Waves*, and they will Drown you for your Kindness: Yes, and much like that, is the Temper of the poorest sort of People; Give them, and they will throw themselves upon you, and throw Dirt in your Face; yet their Aspersions shall but add weight to their own *Sorrow*, and imperfect *Comfort*.

The *Waters* you Feed, shall threaten your *Ruine* with their raging Motions and Inconstancy; yet the Command runs,

runs, you must *Feed* these *Waters*, tho' it is the Nature of them to let the *Benefit* sink and disappear : Fear not, it is in their Will, but not in their Power, either to *hide* or to *drown* your works of *Mercy* : And, for your Incouragement, remember these *Waters*, even the poorest *Vassals*, are made for your *Ease*, your *Honour*, and your *Advantage* ; make it your Business to imploy them in the best manner : These *Waters* will do you good if you understand their Uses ; there is a way for you to be *Charitable to the Poor*, and at the same time receive Profit by their Service. It is an *Element* that is an useful part of the World ; and without the *Poor*, the *Rich* knows not how to Subsist.

Livy, long ago, made *Three* sorts of Men, and his division is thus far verifi'd : There has always been a *Governing* part, and a *Teaching* part among Men ; and there is a *Third* sort that seem to have been Born meerly for *Labour* and *Obedience*. He that hath his Talent in his *Head*, or in his *Coffer*, must imploy such

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as have it in their *Hands* and *Feet*; by which, they may serve themselves with the just and necessary Comforts of this Life, and, at the same time, prove *Benefactors*.

Cast thy Bread upon the Waters.] intimating we are obliged to do *Good*, without *Grudging*, as if what thou *Givest* were to Perish; not looking to perpetuate thy Name, or obtain a present Applause; not expecting so much as a verbal Recompence from the *Receiver*. Write upon the *Sea*, with the best of Pencils, and a Man of exquisite Sight shall not find there one legible Character: No more should we perform acts of *Charity*, for Sight or Ostentation; because the *Good Works* that are most *secretly* carried, shall be most, and most *openly* Rewarded; yet there is a Time, when *Good Works* ought to be *Visible*, and so to be Transacted, that they may be discern'd:

1. For *Distinction*, that a good Christian may be signaliz'd by his *Charity*.

2. For the *Example* and *Encouragement*

ment of others; such Lights are now a days wanting, to those that are misled in the ways of Darknes.

GOD hath so ordered his Blessings, that many times *visible Good Works*, and *publick Rewards* meet, and are as the noise of so many *Waters*: The flux, reflux, and freedom of Motion in that *Element*, teacheth us to multiply *good Works*, and give *Alms* Liberally; The Lord loveth the *Cheerful Giver*, whose Acts of *Charity* resemble the *Waves* rolling one upon another.

Whoever communicates his *Bread unwillingly*, more to deliver himself from the Petitioner's Importunity, than for the sake of *Christ*, or in obedience to his Commands; that Man, surely, either distrusts *GOD's Knowledge*, or his *Promises*, imagining his Master is ignorant of his *Estate*, or his *Meaning*; or he dares not trust him, to requite his *Kindness*.

Will you hear another Reason, that may prevail with us to *Cast our Bread upon the Waters*; It is, because those *Waters*, by their several Channels, return

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to their *Head* and *Fountain*. *C H R I S T* is that *Head*, *Source*, or *Spring* of those *Waters*, on which our *Bread* is to be scatter'd. *Christ* is stiled *Shiloh* in our *English* Bibles, signifying a *Fountain of living Waters*: The *Poor* stream from Him; and by them, our *Charity* shall suddenly be return'd into *Christ's* Bosom: For this, among other Reasons, our *Shiloh*, the Saviour of the World, did appear *Poor*, and destitute of Friends, and Temporal Comforts, to promote, and to make Tryal of the World's *Charity*.

Care is to be taken, that the Frowns of the *Alms-giver* may not sowre the *Bread* he bestows; but let a Liberal Hand, and a cheerful Heart, accompanied with Affability, render the Gift more obliging, and the Gratiuity more valuable; so will your Kindness every where be welcome; so will it be manifest, you Give for the Love of *Christ*, and not meerly in hopes of a Requital; *He that sheweth Mercy let him do it with Cheerfulness*, says the great Doctor of the Gentiles, *Rom. 12. 2 Cor. 9. 7.* From such a Generous

nerous Mind proceeds the Name of *Liberality*, says *Seneca*, in his Tract of *Benefits*; whose Sentences, more than Moral, seem Abstracts of that Evangelical Doctrine, which *St. Paul* Taught the *Romans*, to whom *Seneca* was a Friend, and some think a Disciple: Those *Gifts* are less acceptable that casually fall, or have been extorted by vehement entreaties; but of the Two, the first are most grateful; that is, where a Kindness that was design'd for one Party, happens, against the Will of the *Donor*, to be the Lot of another; which sometimes cometh to pass, through a mistake, by our particular Providence.

A good Christian will approve himself habitually Kind; and he will, in preparation of Mind, always remain *Charitable*. This readiness to *Give*, is pleasing to Heaven, as much as to the longing Receiver; whose Desire is not prevented, altho' his Demands are, by the greatest expedition that can be used in dispensing your Bounty: ('tis in these cases, that speedy Help is double Assistance;

stance; *Multùmque gratius venit quod facili, quàm quod plenâ manu datur.*) It matters not, whether the Hand be *full*, so as it be *ready* to communicate.

The Person that doubts or delays to relieve the *Poor*, shews some unwillingness; and while he taketh time to consult the case, and deferrs his Answer, by causing the Petitioner too long to wait upon his Pleasure he spoils the *Benefit*.

Go, and come again to Morrow, are the words of no good Christian, and but of an ill Neighbour: 'Tis a subtil sort of Denial, that proves the more cruel, because it is Politick. I would chuse rather to refuse the *Mendicant's* Request at once, than twice to Answer him coldly; so as my delays, by tiring the poor Creatures Patience, shall force him to seek that Assistance from others, which is in my Power to contribute. Such is the spiritual Nature of all Works of Mercy, they are apt to evaporate by slow Effusions; whereas he that suddenly *Giveth*, by shortning the Time, doubles the Receiver's Profit: You cannot be delighted with

with the Sighs, Groans, and Tears of Christians, almost Pined and Naked; Must the sorrowful Accents of the Poor, awaken your dull *Charity*? Then suppose your self as much in Want, and as importunate, imploring at the Gate of *Heaven*, of *G O D*, for Mercy; then imagine an Angry Judge delaying to give Ear to your Complaints: Why should not that *G O D* you have so much, and often Offended, use you with the same rigour, and examine you with the same strictness? Why should he not hear, before your Face, ill Neighbours accusing you with Violence and Falshood; scarce permitting you to plead in your own Defence? Why should he not take all advantage of your Pleading? This is your way; and therefore no more than in Justice you ought to expect. Forbear your hopes of Mercy, after your Death, which in your Life you have refus'd to extend to your afflicted Brother.

Cast thy Bread upon the Waters.]

Remember it is an Element of Universal use, in which all plead a freedom; design'd

sign'd for the Benefit of all Creatures; and such is the nature of *Charity*; 'Tis universally communicable, and ought to be every where flowing. We are oblig'd, not only to *Give*, but to *Give* universally, without respecting the Person, or enquiring too severely into the occasion, or other circumstances of his Decay: Hear Saint *Paul* publishing this Doctrine, *Gal. 6. Do good unto all Men*: 'Tis a general Rule without exception; yet there is a Remark follows in the *Tenth* Verse of that Chapter, *That it ought to be done to the Household of Faith especially*; directing our *Alms* to be distributed in a more particular manner to some, than to others.

Receive the Rule therefore in this Sence, *Do good to All*, but to some more eminently; *Give there*, and *Give yonder*, but *Give here* more plentifully; *Allow* them, but *Maintain* these; there *Relieve*, but here *Support*: You must look upon the *Household of Faith* as your own Family, that calls for your Paternal Care and Conduct, as the Neighbourhood does for your Kindness. The

The best next, are those good Offices shewed to your Country: Then all Men, and the whole World of *Pagans*, so far as they Want, and you are able to Contribute, are become objects of your *Charity*: For all good Christians are so far from wishing, and so much further from endeavouring the Confusion of any Person, that they make it their daily business, not only to pray for the Conversion of All, but use all means, at all Times, to benefit their Souls with their Bodies.

Truly, that Mandate for *Alms* is very large, *St. Luke 6. 30. Give to every Man that asketh, &c.* and He that imposeth that Command, is Lord of all that we Possess: And that we may afford so to Give, He hath made us as large a Promise, *St. Matt. 7. 7. Ask, and you shall have: Seek, and you shall find, &c.* *St. Jerom*, with an Eye upon these words of our Blessed Saviour, says, *We must do Good without Discretion; not Setting, but Sowing; not Planting, but Scattering our Acts of Charity; not using too much*

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Exactness, but all manner of *Freedom* in *Giving*; so shall we reconcile to our selves a multitude of Blessings. Thus are we encouraged by the Prophet *Isaiab*, *Blessed are you that Sow beside all Waters.*

The Evangelical *Seer* herein imitates the Language of *Solomon*, *Cast thy Bread upon the Waters*, &c. *Ben. Sira.* varies the Phrase, saying, *Scatter thy Bread upon the Waters, and upon the firm Land also*: By *Firm Land*, he means Men of Estates, Men that are in no Want, as Magistrates, and Temporal Powers, (they are the *Terra firma*,) and the Rule is, to make this Commandment of *Charity*, extend to that great Duty of *Obedience*, to which the *Jews*, as well as we, had enough to be exhorted, that their Man of *Israel* desir'd should include all sorts of Allegiance, which is a Debt, of the Subject, to the Supream Power of the Nation; but because this is a *Tiffany* piece, that will abide but gentle touches, I shall leave the *Rabbi* to manage his own Argument: 'Tis certain, *Love* comprehends all that we owe to Superiors,

as well as Inferiors ; and we ought to Obey the Higher Powers, more for Conscience sake, than Terror.

This is the meaning of those Doctors, that tell us, *Dominion is founded on Love, and that by Love, the World is govern'd*: But, while I am discoursing of *Alms*, I shall confine the Words of *Solomon* to a more narrow Signification: And forsaking the Notion of the *Rabbi*, side with that of the Philosopher, *Ubique homo beneficio est locus*; Where-ever a Man is, there's place for a Benefit; for where there is a Man, there is Misery; which, as soon as he declares, we are oblig'd to shew him Mercy. When the Poor Man standeth at thy door, in expectation of thy Kindness, be careful your Examinations of his Person, his Parentage, his Education, his Country, his manner of Living, be not over tedious or detrimental; not made to protract Time, or find Excuses, or that you may take occasion of Denial: Yet you may lawfully question the Party concern'd, as the Mariners did *Jonah*; *Who art thou? Where*

is thy Habitation? What's your Employ? Not as a News-monger, or one fond of Idle Stories; but as a good Christian to discourage Idleness, and promote Piety: Not looking for eminent Vertues in the Beggar, nor demanding large Testimonials; as if you were to bestow an Office, or bequeath him your Estate; as if you were not then design'd to relieve his present Wants, but to reward his Merits: Enquire only for *God's-sake*, and Give for *God's-sake*, from *G O D* alone expecting a Recompence.

What if these *Waters* are many? What if they rise higher and higher upon our Practice? Fear not the failure of your Estate, because the Sacrifices are frequent and numerous; because *Alms* is derived from the Corruption of the *Greek*, *Eleemosynary*, [ἐλεημοσύνη,] whose Root is Mercy, [ἐλεος,] of which *Christ* is the Fountain, and that Fountain is inexhaustible: Yet there is a barbarous Author, derives *Eleemosynary*, from two words of the *Hebrews*, viz. *Eli*, *God*; and *Meis*, *Water*; and to confirm his Derivation,

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He stileth *Alms*, the *Dew of Heaven*. The Gentleman seemeth to have been no great Proficient either in *Greek* or *Hebrew*; for he might have taken his *Etymology*, with as great Reason, from *Elias* and *Moses*; and from that inferr'd, *Charity* comprehends the *Whole Law*, and the *Prophets*.

But, leaving *Etymologies*, *Alms* is defined a work of Mercy, Love, and Liberality, performed only for *G O D's* sake, to some necessitated Persons. In the Work, there is to be considered somewhat within us [*aliquid intus*] so as, looking at home, we find it a Christian Act of *Mercy*; but if we look abroad, it appears an external Act of *Charity*, that is exerted in Obedience to the Divine *Commandment*: We make it a Beauty, by putting upon it the becoming Face of *Liberality*: 'Tis conceiv'd by Compassion; but *Love* gives it the hand of Accomplishment. A Bountiful Hand and Heart, oblige even those that Hate you, by making their Favours Publick; and by this happy way

of doing well, bribe their Enemies into good Nature.

If you desire to see the Mother of *Alms*, let me tell you, first, if she could appear in Humane Shape, nothing but *Truth* could vie Beauty with her; for her Name is Charity: She is spotted with Stars, and spangled with Divine Graces. Here give me leave to say, That *Alms-giving* is a good Work, and is Meritorious; but the Merit is not plac'd upon the bare Humane Act, but upon the Grace of *G O D's* Holy Spirit, and upon his never-failing Promise, which are the Grounds and constitutive Principles of all Merit. 'Tis not us, but the *Grace of God working in us*, and the Third Person of the Holy Trinity co-operating with us, that deserves *G O D's* Notice, and his Recompense, [*Principia Meritorum omnium sunt Divina:*] Yet not excluding the Will and Disposition of the *Alms-giver*, that hath the Honour, in all good works, to co-operate with his Maker. *God is Love*, and all works of Love, partake so much of the Divine Nature, that

that they must needs be Crowned. But this Discourse relates to the *Promise*; yet we were Treating of the *Commandment*, which enjoyns us to *Give*; weighing the *Receiver's* Wants, but over-looking his Deserts; for we are not bidden to Taste those *Waters* that we are to cast our *Bread upon*, to prove whether they are Sweet or Bitter; for, who-ever giveth *Alms*, not because *GOD* hath so Comanded, but because he supposeth either the Poor have merited so much at his hands already, or now do, or will hereafter deserve his *Charity*; that Person, to speak properly, giveth not an *Alms*, but dischargeth the Debt, and stateth an Account. So he that giveth not meerly for the Lord's-sake, but in hopes of some Humane Requital, instead of bestowing his *Alms*, he purchaseth a *Kindest*, and maketh himself an Interest.

The especial attract of *Alms*, ought to be Divine Love, without any by-respect to Temporal Returns, or the Merits of the Receiver.

Why should I tire you with Repetitions? Effects of Love ought to be enlarg'd only to such as are really Necessitated; for Want is the proper Object of Mercy. Where there is no Want, there may be Favours, Gifts, and Presents, but no perfect *Charity*.

Thus far in reference to the Definition: The Division of Alms hath anciently been in Seven Spiritual Acts, respecting the Soul:

1. To pray for.
2. To Forgive.
3. To Admonish.
4. To Instruct.
5. To Counsel.
6. To Comfort: And,
7. To Forbear.

And in Seven more, as pertinent to the Body.

1. *To Feed the Hungry, and give Drink to the Thirsty*; which some divide, and make Two different Offices; but

but I take it as one and the same Act of Benevolence, putting in the second place, *viz.*

2. Assistance or Protection of the Weak, from Bodily Dangers.
3. To Cloath the Naked.
4. To Lodge the Harbourless.
5. To Visit the Sick.
6. To Bury the Dead: *And,*
7. To Redeem the Captive, &c.

These are Principal Acts of *Charity*, which affords us a mighty Prospect into a large Field of Discourse, but somewhat beside our present Business: I desire only to lead you to this Duty; to that end, setting before you, how much good those best of Men, that went before us, have perform'd for our Example: If we look no farther than the *Jews*, (*G O D's* Select People) they were injoynd every Third Year, *To Tythe the encrease of their Lands a Second Time, for Charitable Uses*, (after they had Tythed it once for the maintainance of the Clergy :) So we read, *Deut. 14.*
They

They gave a Tythe extraordinary design'd for an *Alms*, to Four sorts of People :

1. The *Stranger*.
2. The *Fatherless*.
3. The *Widow*: And,
4. The *Poor Infirm Levite*, that could not Officiate.

And in Harvest, they were forbidden the Reaping every Corner of their Fields, and might not gather up the Gleanings: They were not permitted to pull every Cluster of Grapes in their *Vintage*: Nor to beat every Bough of their *Olives*: Nor to fetch a Sheaf forgotten.

These were *Eleemosynary* parcels, design'd for the Relief of all that were Poor and Afflicted. These Statutes are recorded, *Levit. 19. 23.* And the same Commands, and Prohibitions, we find *Deut. 24.* rendring this single, as sufficient, *I am the Lord, your God*; which adds force to the Mandate, and puts a period to the *Duty*: as if the *Sacred Volume* had thus declar'd; Murmur not
at

at these Orders, nor grudge such considerable Leavings; for, *I am the Lord*, you are but Tenants at Will: All you possess, is Mine: It is an Honour I do you, to give you the Title: You hold your Lands, your Lives, your All, of Me, by certain Services, and by Courtesie: *I am the Lord*; the Property resides in Me: There is nothing yours, at most, but by Will, or by Copy; so as you have no Right to Ingrose the good things of this Life, or to hold them in durance. *I am the Lord*; from Me you receive all your Treasure; therefore, fear not Poverty: I gave you this, and can give you more; take My Word, your *Alms* shall be doubled in Blessings, and restor'd into your Bosoms.

The *Jews* were commanded not only to be Charitable in the Field, but had a plain Statute for *Alms-giving*, at their own Houses, *Deut. 15. If there is a Poor Man among thy Brethren, within thy Gates, thou shalt not harden thy Heart, nor shut thy Hand from thy poor Brother; but thou shalt open thy Hand wide, and thy Heart shall*

shall not be grieved, when thou Givest.

Observe in the Text, *Three* Motives to Compassion.

1. The Man is *Poor*.
2. He is neer in Blood, *One among thy Brethren*.
3. He is *within thy Gates*.

Let his Poverty make you sensible of his Want: Let his Relation move you to Pity: Let his Neighbourhood inflame your Affection. And you may there take notice of two directions in *Giving*:

1. Dispence your *Alms* with a hand wide open; that is, Give Bountifully.
2. With a willing Heart, free from Grudging.

These latter Authorities are derived from the Law that was given at Mount *Sinai*. Let us now hear the Prophets.

David maketh it a Characteristical Note of a good Man, to be Merciful; and holdeth giving *Alms* the best use of an Estate, *Psal.* 72. 2. He nameth it the great work of the *Messiah*, to Defend the

the Poor, Heal the Infirm, and Succour the Afflicted.

Solomon, his Son, informs us; *Prov.* 29. 7. *A Righteous Man considereth the cause of the Poor*; adding in the 14. ver. of the same Chapter, *The King that faithfully judgeth the Poor, shall have his Throne Established*: And this is the Wiſest of Monarchs.

You may read in the Book of the Prophet *Iſaiah*, The way to Divine and *Eternal Honour*, is *dealing thy Bread to the Hungry, lodging Exiles, covering the Naked*; and, in a ſtrange Phraſe, *to draw out thy Soul to the Empty*: Then He continues, *Thy Light ſhall ariſe from Obſcurity, thy priſtine Darkneſs ſhall become Light, and reſemble the Sun in its Glory*. This is the Evangelical Prophet.

We read in the 22. Chap. of *Ezekiel*, GOD threatneth the *Jews* with many terrible Judgments, for *Oppreſſing the Stranger, and Vexing the Fatherleſs and Widow*. This is the Priest of the Captives transferr'd with *Jehoiachim*.

Daniel

Daniel maketh *Alms* the truest sign of sincere Repentance; and will have *Charity* put into the definition of the Righteous. This is the Man of Visions, to whom all Changes, which should concern the *Jews*, from the *Babylonian* Captivity, to the general Resurrection, was Revealed. These preceded the *Messiah*; and their Writings make the biggest part of the *Old Testament*. Let us now consult the Gospel.

To begin with the *Baptist*. These *Alms* are the good Fruit he demands; Fruit fit for *Penitents* to produce. Our dear Master Preacheth the same Doctrine *St. Luke II.* Give *Alms* of such things as you have, and behold all things are clean unto you: As if *CHRIST* had told us, *Alms* are instead of all Levitical Purifications; and are accepted in Heaven sooner than the curious Prescription of *Moses*. Love is a flame that cleanseth better than the Legal Rites; and a Fire that is consistent with *Holy Water*; the small Sacrifices of Christian Love, recommended in the *New-Testament*, have
Ver-

Vertues Superior to the first Fruits, and those greater ones of the *Old-Testament*: They have power to Sanctifie our whole Estate, to make it Firm and Fertile, and to propagate it with our Issue. *'Tis more Blessed to give, than to receive*; that's a Maxim of the Blessed *JESUS*, which his Apostles and Disciples did approve; and every true Christian will acknowledge.

St. Peter mightily presseth us to Christian Love, and Hospitality, 1 *Pet.* cap. 1. ver. 22. *Seeing you have purified your Souls, in obeying the Truth, through the Spirit, and to unfeigned love of the Brethren, see that you love one another with pure Heart fervently.* This is the Prince of the Apostles.

St. John speaks of nothing so much, as Love and Charity, 1 *St. John* 4. 7. *Let us Love one another, for Love is of God, &c.* This is the Beloved Disciple.

St. James extols good Works much, and with some vehemence promotes Charity; deriding the *Solifidian* Professors, that have nothing [*ὁμι τοῦ σώματος*,] besides

besides a strong Credulity ; with which *Julian* upbraided some early Believers, that expected Salvation by Faith only. This *James* was the first Christian Bishop of the Holy City *Jerusalem*.

St. Paul, (whose Writings too many wrested to their own Destruction, which was one cause some other Apostles wrote so little, and some wrote nothing :) He was careful and zealous to deal with the first Christians of *Rome*, and those in *Greece* and *Asia*, for a Collection, as *St. Peter*, *St. James*, and *St. John* had charged him, when he first Travelled to make Profelytes, *Gal. 2. 10.* And this is the great Doctor of the *Gentiles*.

Will you have another added to these Four great Apostles ? The Author of that Learned Epistle to the *Hebrews*, writeth in this manner, *To do Good, and to Communicate forget not ; for with such Sacrifices GOD is well pleased.* If you will contend that Epistle was Written by *St. Paul*, I shall be content to Humor you, seeing the Doctrine of good Works shall receive no disparagement by his Authority. Thus

Thus far the Duty hath been ratify'd by *Precepts*, but *Examples* are more forcible motives to Well-doing, and are as numerous in the Bible, pointing out to Christians (as so many *Mercuries*) the direct way to *Felicity*.

Abraham sitting at the door of his Tent, lookteh for some weary Traveller, to whom he may give an Instance of his *Charity*; who, for his repeated Works of Mercy, deserv'd the Reverend Title of the *Father of the Faithful*.

Lot, standing at the Gate of the City, doth expect some distressed Stranger to make Experiment of his Kindness, and Taste his Hospitality; He gave the wandering Passenger a Meeting, lest he should be prevented in his Courtesies. This was an Oriental Prince and Prelate, Patron of the Five Cities, and Lord of *Zoar*.

It was the custom of *Job*, to entertain the Fatherless in his House, and invite the Poor to his own Table. This Man, if you will have it so, was High-Priest of *Hierapolis*, and Prince in *Arabia*.

F

Solomon

Solomon, in such Practices, was Exemplary ; shewing himself in Love, as well as Empire, a Successor to his Father David. This Man, after God's own Heart, thought himself not degraded by particular Acts of *Devotion* and *Charity*. He knew how to reconcile Love and Honor ; and reputed himself no less a King, for distributing, at certain Seasons, a Loaf of Bread, a Flaggon of Wine, and a Portion of Flesh, to every single Person of his decay'd Subjects.

Observe how the *Jews*, when they were return'd from their Captivity, celebrated their Festivals with remarkable Contributions. Their Forms of Devotion ended, they did enjoy themselves in a generous participation of Delicacies ; they drank freely, to Cheerfulness, not to Excess, and dispatcht away Provisions to the Poorest Families, that they might be sharers in the Joy, and the Feast, which they were not able to furnish ; and be made Partakers in the Gratitude they paid to Heaven, by shewing themselves pleas'd for National Blessings.

We

We read, *Gen. 21. 33.* of the Patriarch's Grove, which, the *Rabbins* inform us, was Planted purposely for Charitable Entertainments; which they gather, because the Letters of the Name [*עֵשֶׁל* *Esbel*, a Grove,] signifie by Cabalism, *Meat*, *Drink*, and *Lodging*; viz. *Achilah*, *Shutyan*, *Linah*.

To pass from the *Jews* to the *Christians*, How are the Churches of *Achaia* and *Macedonia* celebrated in *St. Paul's* Epistles, for their generous Contributions? The *Prayers* and *Alms* of *Cornelius* ascended to *GOD*, shewing their Master the way to Heaven: And tho' both are very laudable, yet the Fathers ascribe to *Alms* the Preheminence.

So to Live, and Practise Religion, is to accomplish the Laws, and comply with the Will of *Solomon*: 'Tis to do more than that comes to; for *Solomon* was but a Type of *Christ*: But to exercise Love, is to follow the Steps of *Christ* himself, and to obey the Dictates of the Supream Master; who, having no Purse-Bearer for himself, had always

a Treasurer for the Distressed; and daily wrought Miracles, to satisfy their Wants in the Wilderness; choosing rather to Fast *Forty Days*, than to multiply Loaves for appeasing his own Hunger; He having no House to hide his Head in, laid his Commands upon the Heavens, that his Followers might be freed from the Injuries of the ill Weather. While he was contentedly depriv'd of ordinary conveniencies, he was not contented his Disciples should suffer; but for their sakes made use of his Divinity, that He might shew himself Hospitable in the Desert.

'Tis not for *Men* alone to pretend to, or claim the *Glory* that attends Christian Love; for *Women* seem naturally more Compassionate. Sacred and Prophane Stories will furnish us with Infinite Precedents of their *Charity*: The *Zereptan* Widow, to relieve the Prophet *Elijah*, hazards the Pining of her self, and her Son, and puts to the adventure, all the sad accidents of a miserable Famine. Another cast two Mites into the *Corban*, (or Sacred Treasury) from which the
 Poor

Poor of all sorts were Relieved; It was her whole Pittance; and to approve her self Charitable, she runs the Risk of the most disconsolate effects of Poverty. *Charity* (the Name is Feminine, and) hath always been Pictur'd in the Shape, and with the Features of a Beautiful Woman: The Christian Church takes delight in the rehearsal of the Names of her loving, and her officious Daughters: She hath many, such as *Dorcas*, that employ, and please themselves in Lodging Strangers; in working admirable Pieces for Temples and Altars; and designing their Studies and Portions for the publick Uses of true Religion: They exercise their Christian Vertues, by giving *Alms* daily, Washing the Saints Feet, Visiting the Sick, and Comforting all those that are in any manner of Affliction.

Credible *Historians* acquaint us with the *Hospitality* of the Ancient City *Bretinore*, in *Italy*; how the Burgesses vied *Bounty*, & strived to exceed one another, in putting Obligations upon Strangers. So great was their Emulation to do good,

that, in fine, they determin'd to Erect a Column in their Market, to which Brazen Rings in Plates were fastened; upon those Plates, the Names of all the Noted Families in Town were Engraven'd; all Strangers were carried thither, and made choice of one of those Names for their Reception: The House, to which the Stranger by choice desir'd to resort, was forthwith inform'd, by one of the daily Waiters; the Master of the Family there-upon came rejoycing, and conducted his Guests, that was sometimes miserable Poor, to his House, with signs of Triumph: And, Why not? seeing *Charity* goes attended with Reward and Victory.

'Tis not always, that we ought to do well with so much solemnity; For many times, Works of *Mercy* are best perform'd with Privacy, *Sound not a Trumpet when thou givest Alms*, says our dear Master, *St. Matthew 6*. No, not a Trumpet, says *Chrisologus*; because such Kindness, attended with a Noise, cometh not so much like a Friend, as like an Enemy: It seems to Insult over the Wants of the

Re-

Receiver, and to assault his Modesty. This is not to Relieve so much, as to Triumph over thy poor Brother. It is worse: It is an upbraiding of G O D, as if He was beholding to your Favour, and could not enable that poor Heart to Subsist without your *Charity*. If that be the *English* way of giving *Alms*, such Donors must pay themselves with the popular Name of *Patriots*, or *Benefactors* to the Publick. They must forbear their Pretensions to future Recompence; because our great Master declares, they have their *Reward*. The prevailing Prayers of the Poor, and the never-failing Promise of G O D, shall prove but of small advantage to their mistaken Souls, that had no respect to either of them, in their *Alms-giving*, but only to the Applause of the People.

Let it suffice, that G O D discerns thy Bounty; make Him only thy Witness, that is, to be thy Judge; and the Righteous G O D shall make Requital, that knows how much confidence you repose in his Justice. You may remain assur'd,

He that would not have the Left-Hand, know what the Right-hand giveth, will not allow you to tell them that will tell every Body, how much you bestow. Give *Alms* there, where there is no Man to discover it, and *Thy Father which seeth in Secret will Reward you openly.*

Thus we have Travers'd the *Commandment*: Let us proceed to the *Promise*; *Thou shalt find thy Bread, after many Days, which thou dost cast upon the Waters.*

Seeing Riches are valuable Blessings, such as afford us in this Life no despicable Comforts; it concerns us to know, for whose sake, & upon what account we cast them away; for it is somewhat to deprive our selves, and our Posterity of their Service: Hear me, therefore, and acknowledge the Charitable Practices of the Church, to be founded upon the highest Reason. You will be loath to part with your Treasure, but upon the best Security; you shall have the best Word of a *King*, and a *Priest*; and They are both
invid-

inviolable. *Solomon* engages his Honour, that *you shall find it*; which is as much as to secure you, you shall be no Losers. What you scatter upon the Waves, doth not perish; but the Stream will return to restore your Kindness.

Have you never seen a Ship, of good Burthen, Laden with the Richest Merchandice, arrive in a safe Haven? She carries out of the Owners Sight; She makes a Voyage of many days; yet, at length, she returns her Treasure upon the Exchange, and brings the Adventurer an advantageous *Cargo*.

But the Ship may be wrackt, and there the Lading may Perish: But *Here* you run no such Hazard; For, supposing the *Poor* should Miscarry, your *Alms* will be safely conveyed to the Port; for the Bearer is no sooner out of your Door, or the Gift out of your Hand, but *GOD* takes it into his Protection and Custody: Holy Angels are the Convoy, and *CHRIST* looking upon the Donative, now to be Consecrated, undertakes to balance all Losses. He considers

siders of Gains, to place to the Donor's Account, and of a Way to double your Interest: The Lord chargeth himself with the Gift, where-ever it is; and therefore doth not allow you to demand or expect Repayment, by Word or Deed, from a Third Person.

Let it be the part of *Publicans* and *Sinners*, to Feast their thriving Neighbours; while He that designs to perform Acts of *Charity*, must, by his Invitations, make the *Sick*, the *Blind*, and the *Lame*, his Guests, and those poor People that want a Dinner: So shall he be Blessed; so shall he make himself a growing Interest; If he dare take the Word of the World's *Messiah*, he shall not fail to be Rewarded at the Resurrection of the Just, *St. Luke 14.* which some offer to assert, shall precede the general Resurrection. The Reward is certain, *Thou shalt find it*; the terms are positive. Our good Deeds cannot pass unregarded: Not a Cup of cold Water; not a Morsel of Bread, shall escape *G O D's* Notice, or fall short of His Remuneration.

Thou

Thou shalt find it ; Thou thy self. 'Tis a strange Kindness, that all Persons have for their own Flesh and Blood : Men are now a-days, more than ever, Lovers of themselves ; and they will adventure that upon their own Heads, which they dare not trust upon the Heads of their Children and Relations. What Man is he, that possesseth an Estate or Honors, which he desireth not to continue for ever ? Behold a Way to preserve your Dignities, and hold your Mannors to Eternity ! Convert them into *Solomon's Bread*, and *Cast them upon the Waters* ; it will prove pregnant of Blessings, and resembling good Seed, it will continue to grow and ripen, and to yield an everlasting Harvest : *Tou shalt find it after many Days*, in Heaven.

Suppose a Man as Solicitous as can be, to Get and Save ; 'tis not in his Power to secure his Estate upon Earth, so much as to the fourth Generation. Notwithstanding his *Gains*, he has no certainty, but that *Poverty* shall seize his *Sons* or *Nephews* : But if you covet, to secure your Possessions

ons to the Third and Fourth Generation, take the Measures here prescrib'd by *Solomon*. You shall not only leave an Assurance to the Third Heir, but you shall also retain what you give away: And, changing the Property by those *Alms* you bestow, you shall both make it theirs, and your own for ever. 'Tis only so much of your Estate, that you can possibly loose, as you are not free to impart: For all that you give in the way of *Charity*, you shall surely find; and reckon so much goeth towards the making you spiritual Body the more Glorious; and to purchase for you one of those many Mansions, in the House of our Heavenly Father; where every token of Christian Love shall appear an Ornament to the Donor, to render him bright as a Star, and serve his Appartment, instead of Painting and Coronishi. Why, good *Sir*, should you then demand or expect a Requital at the Hand of him that Receiveth the Boon? As if you knew not the Man to be *GOD's* Receiver; or, as if you were altogether

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unacquainted with the Disposition of that Just and Bountiful Master he serveth. Would you have many Thanks return'd? or, Would you be highly Courted? or, Basely Flatter'd out of your Benevolence? Thanks and Praises are but indifferent Bribes; they pay no Debts, but only serve to corrupt Servile Spirits: Make your self greater than that, and manifest more Honour than that comes to; for to disburse considerable Summs for those base ends, is no part of *Charity*, but an ill Exchange.

Where real Effects are Bartered for Oily Words, and Slavish Gestures; [*Grat'is non datur quod gratiis venditur,*] so doing, you sell your Kindness, and make but a bad Market; because, at the same time, you lose Possession of that you had, and loose sight of your Pay-Master. If that be your way to distribute *Bread*, for the sake of respective Honours and Address, you must compound with them for the whole Debt; and accepting less than half Pay, for the Whole, take your leave of additional Blessings, and future
Glory;

Glory; chusing to take the Word of a *Beggar*, rather than the Word of *GOD*; you loose, at one instant, both your Commemoration and Requital.

When your meaning is to find your *Bread*, give it upon *GOD*'s Account, that *GOD* may become your Debtor; so shall the *Bread* thou dost dispense, nourish thy own Soul unto Life everlasting.

Thou castest *Bread* upon the *Waters*, which vary themselves in many Figures, and often change their condition; yet, through the Divine Power and Truth, 'tis reserv'd for your Use, and the *Bread* is found again; intimating, how the Substance of all things is preserv'd entire, and lives eternally.

The *Bread* which you lately did impart, you have given over for lost: 'Tis not so, your Fear imposeth upon your Reason; the same shall be return'd in another Nature, and in a larger measure. How, are you qualified to Receive, but are not contented to Give? Is it your design to put limits to Providence, and
con-

confine this World to rest in your Coffers, that was created in Motion?

The *Gift* is put here, by an happy Figure, for that Fruit and Recompence, which after many days, follows the Act of Giving, it is so contriv'd, to render the Giver as certain of the One, as ever he was sure of the Other: As there is upon Earth, a Communion of Saints, maintain'd by certain Spiritual Acts of *Devotion*, mixt with *Charity*; so there is an everlasting Retaliation between *Alms* and its Recompence.

There is a time set down (tho' not many circumstances of it,) when the Charitable Person shall be Rewarded, *after many Days*, says the Royal Preacher; so I thought, says the Miser, my Patience will be tired with waiting, for the Interest of my Money; it will be long, you say, (and I know not how long) ere I shall be the better for that I give away. Doth my Father lye the easier in his Grave, for the Legacy he left to the Poor of the Parish? His Condition might have been more easie [*Chuff*]
had

had he bestow'd upon his Son better *E-ducation*; all his Cares and Prayers are lost upon you, his Successor; that shew your self ungrateful to Heaven, and to your Parents.

I leave you to Time and Torment, to correct your Mistake; but know, these Words [*after many Days*] carry their own weight; a Sence so pleasing, and include an Argument so strong, that when you, and your Ingratitude, are Buried together, it shall serve to oblige Generations to come to the performance of this Duty. 'Tis *After many Days*, the Charitable Man is said to find his *Bread*; to signifie he shall live many Days; his Life shall not be shortened, neither shall his Death be sudden: But his Days shall be prolong'd in this World meerly that he may do good in his Generation.

The Wicked and Blood-Thirsty Man shall not live out half his Days; for *Wicked*, you may read *Uncharitable*, because the greater part of Wickedness proceeds from a Defect of *Charity*. But there shall

shall be Days added to the Bountiful Man's Years, as to *Hezekiah's*; until his Years with his Vertues, encrease beyond the number of his Hairs, and procure for him everlasting Benedictions, and Embellishments.

Thou shalt find it after many Days: 'Tis as if the *Wise-Man* had said, Thou shalt live many Days to do good with thy Riches; and when thou hast finish'd thy Course of multiplying good Offices to thy Brethren; then, *After many Days*, thou shalt find an Heavenly Treasure, to the Accomplishment of thy Felicity. Think not the time long because the Pay is certain; think it not tedious, because at that time, Blessings are growing for thy Comfort, and multiplying for thy Use and Advantage. Why should you think the Time long, when all Time is inconsiderable, less than a Minute, compar'd with that Eternity which shall afford you an Abyss of Joys, and Treasures that can never perish?

Thou shalt find it after many Days: There is a Time set apart, in the secret

G|

Will

Will of *G O D*, wherein the Lord hath decreed to make you a plenary Requital; Not of some Earthly thing, which is Transitory; but full Pay, and of a Nature Spiritual, Glorious, and Permanent. It may be what you give away to Day, you would have again to Morrow; the Seed you Sow, doth not grow with that Expedition; you must allow it Time to dye, and to revive again; and to grow, before it can ripen to Harvest: (But you dare trust *Earth* further than *Heaven*.) If you will have your Reward before its due time, you must have it imperfect, as immature Fruit gather'd out of Season.

But, my Advice is, and it is *Solomon's*, To give it leave to come to Perfection; so shall you be sure to find it, *After many Days*, such as you desire to have it, in all Points absolute.

'Tis the Will of *G O D*, that as he forbears to punish us many Days, and many Days waits for our Amendments; so we should add *Patience* to *Charity*, that, at once, the two Vertues may be Crowned.

How-

However, for our greater Encouragement, there are present Remunerations appointed for those that are Charitable; they shall have their Wishes very much gratify'd in this World, and in the World to come, their Hopes shall expire in a happy Fruition. Here, in this Life, you shall receive the Wages of Love in a good measure; but, in the next, you shall enjoy what you expect in a satisfactory manner; or, as the *Chaldee* Paraphrase reads it, *Plenarily*. For indeed, these words, *After many Days*, are principally referr'd to the Resurrection, and future Glory. Can you pretend to Christian *Faith* and *Hope*, and at the same time Despair and Murmur? Will you prescribe your *G O D* the Time, any more than the Method of Payment? Hear the Voice of our Saviour! *Lo! I come*. Yet you say, Where is the Promise of his Coming? If there be many Days before *Christ's* Advent, there is the greater Preparation making for your Reception; and when He comes, you will be fully satisfied for attending the Lord's Leisure.

Shorten not your Hand of Relief, because *GOD* payeth Interest for the whole Time of your Forbearance: You spoyl your Recompence, by coveting to have it suddenly. Comfort your self in recollecting the good Offices you have perform'd, and in a good Conscience in *GOD*'s Promise, and in Comforts of this Life, that are ordinarily conferr'd and enjoy'd by the Charitable Person, as sure Earnest of a future Reward. Have a little Patience, the Days may be *many*; yet, at most, they are but *Days* that will soon expire. Persist in your Godly purposes; 'Tis not long, ere Mercies will plentifully return into your Bosom.

The Time of waiting is not exprest by *Tears*, or *Months*, nor by so much as *Weeks*; but only by *Days*, that quickly come to their Period. *Days* are mentioned, because a *Day* receives denomination from, and has reference to the *Sun*'s Motion; importing, how *Christ*, the Son of Righteousness, hath in this *Day* many great Works to perform in the Hearts of the Faithful; many Divine
Graces

Graces to quicken; many Methods of Holiness, and Measures of Redemption to finish; we must not not antedate our own or others Happiness. When the Work of *Christ* is perfect in us, we shall surely find the Reward of our *Charity*.

Come then with a chearful Heart, and a Liberal Hand; give the World an Instance of that Love and Bounty, which appears in imparting much to many; and shows it self with advantage in the quantity of the Gift, and the multitude of Receivers.

He that Soweth Bountifully, (or as the Greek readeth, in Blessings) 2 Cor. 9. 6. shall Reap in Benedictions and Plentifully. The Apostle there proveth, That the same Assurance the Seed-Man has of an Increase, according to the proportion of his Sowing, that *GOD* will multiply his Favours upon the *Alms-giver*, with equivalent Augmentations of Glory.

It was *David's* way of Praying, and ought to be ours, *Have mercy upon us, O Lord, according to the Multitude of thy Mercies*: Which is so far Doctrinal, that

we must afford a multitude of Mercies to our poor Brethren ; and then we may approach the Throne of Grace with boldness, having assurance that our Petitions will be Answered.

You shall find it after many Days, says the Royal Preacher ; and though a Miser may refuse it, yet a good Christian ought to look upon *Solomon's Word*, as better Security than Bond and Judgment. You are to have Regard to the poor Man's Wants, and at the same time, to your own Ability ; and confiding in Providence, are to Give rather more than your Estate can afford ; for such is the Advice of the discreet Noble-man to his Son, *Tob. cap. 4. v. 8. Of abundance, Give accordingly, Of a Little, be not afraid of giving Alms of that Little ; for thereby thou hoardest up to thy self Treasure against the day of Necessity.* Did I not tell you this before ? His Opinion agrees with mine ; You are to live upon the thing only which you gave away. It follows in the 10. verse of that 4. chap. *Alms deliver from Death ;* (meaning
Death

Death Eternal :) Where you find, in what manner you shall be repaid your Acts of *Charity*, with Life everlasting.

But still you Hæsitare, and look as if you would Reply, I am very loath to part with a present Estate, without a present valuable Consideration: That is your Mistake; you part with no present Estate, and you receive that, at present, which ought to be your Satisfaction. What would you be Recompensed for? you have so much only, as you can use; the residue you fancy to be yours; but there is no more yours, than you can enjoy; of a Thousand Mannors, and Ten Thousand Drovers of Cattle, these may please your Eye, and your Conceit, and with the thoughts of Possessing, you may satisfy your Hungry Humours; but indeed another shall enjoy as much as you. Your Parks, Woods, Warrens, and your Game, with all the Delights and Gallantries of your Family; out of all these, you can take no more than Meat, Drink, and Cloathing; for which a small Estate would suffice. But, here, you are Su-

perior to many, having wherewithal to do good; that is, many good things trusted to your disposal; and, here you have a ready way pointed out, to make a Temporal Income to become Spiritual and Eternal: for, only by giving *Alms*, you shall lay up for your self Treasure in Heaven, of which you can never be depriv'd; and you shall forthwith receive some Temporal Satisfaction, for your Acts of *Charity*. For the Merciful Man never fails of particular Blessings in this Life, by Health, Strength, Wit, Peace, Preservation from Dangers, by sure Friends, by a good Wife, by hopeful Children, by secret Contentment in the Mind and Joy that is unspeakable; by a clear Reputation, and quiet Conscience: By some or more of these Enjoyments, the Charitable Person shall immediately find his *Bread* that he hath scatter'd upon the *Waters*.

Placing, therefore, One Eye upon your present Condition, fix the other on the poor Man's Necessities; and let the sight of his Miseries, be the Rule of your Merit

Mercies; for, in *Alms-giving*, much is but a little, where more is wanting; and a little is much, where that little sufficeth.

Let the greedy Chuff plead a Distinction of thine and mine: Let him do what he can to secure Property: Let him Entail his Lands, and enterprize all he may, to confirm his Title, or enlarge his Possessions: Let him call *Good Works* a kind of Community, and oppose *Alms* as much as levelling: Let him say, All that I hold is mine; and what Wrong can I commit, by keeping my own to my self? For my part, *Sir*, I love Peace and Plenty; your Speech-making ought to be directed to them that affect Lawless Lives, or Civil Wars, seeking to deprive others of their Rights, and their Inheritance. I should like *Religion* better, if the *Teachers* were not as so many *Leeches*, Give, Give continually; I love to hear them Preach up *Christ* Crucify'd, and forbear their old *Popish* Stories of *Alms* and *Good Works*: You know, there was no Beggar in *Israel*; and, were I
Task.

Task-Master General, there should be none left in *England*. But I think of all poor People, the poor Gentleman is the most importunate; his Hand is always full of *Briefs* and *Letters of Request*; and I seldom see one of that Tribe, but I am feeling in my Pocket.

When you have spoken your Pleasure, *Nabal*, against *Christian Love*, and *Charitable Contributions*, it is but one way of wounding your self with your own Weapon; seeing the way to make that you possess your own, is by your power of *Disposal*: Which, if it be never put into Act, how can you be assured you have such a Power. By giving it away, we come to know it is yours; and, as without *Property*, there can be no *Charity*; so *Charity*, in its several Acts, doth best confirm *Property*: From the Laws of *Thine* and *Mine*, you bring an ill Inference, whereas, by Giving, those Laws are best put in Execution: You must give, not only for the Preservation of *Discipline* and *Order*, but also for the Maintainance of your Title. Unless the
Bread

Bread be yours, how can you dispose of it? There is neither *Giving*, nor Obligation by *Gift*, where all is in common. If you peruse the principal Causes, of the first distinction between *Mine* and *Thine*, long ago confirm'd by Custom, by the Positive Laws of *GOD*, and of all Nations; you will find these, among others:

1. *Encouragement to Labour*, to prevent Idleness; for, where the most Industrious, and the most Negligent Persons, were to be sharers alike of a common Fund, too many would lye basking in the Sun, while others were Sweating at their Imployment.

2. *For Preservation of Peace*; they being most remote from War, that have most to loose; who cannot soon be induc'd to Fight, so long as they can quietly enjoy the Effects, and Fruits of their Labour and Industry.

3. *To distinguish Families*; because it appears the Will of Heaven, that some Houses shall be remarkable for *Blessings*, some for *Vertues*; and that some should be stiled from their Inheriting of Ancient

cient Riches, *Generous* and *Noble*; while others should be noted, for a *Dull*, and *Idle Generation*, born under Command, to remain Slaves and Peasants.

With this distinction, of *Thine* and *Mine*, began a Subordination of Men in Civil Societies, for the sake of Government. But, of all these causes of difference of Estates, none is greater than this, That there might be some Endowed with Riches, to impart; and that there might be some poor People, to make tryal of the Rich Man's Faith in GOD's Promises, and design'd for his own Good to make Experiment upon his *Charity*: That, by contributing much in *this Life*, he might obtain, in the *next*, a more Illustrious and lasting Inheritance. Art thou a Propriator? yet you must own a Lord in chief of all your Substance.

The Earth is the Lords, and the fulness thereof; all Lands are held of him in *Capite*: So, to alledge Property, when GOD Commands you to Disburse something upon his Account, is to say
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somewhat that is answer'd by the Laws of Supream Right, and suspended by the degrees of *Charity*. It is enough, that you have the Honour and the Happiness of Distribution, and to reserve enough for your own Uses: Take what sufficeth for your Family, defraud not your Successors; and behold those poor People yonder, are sent to be Sharers of all that is to be spared from You, and your Posterity: If *this* or that be needless to you, the *same* presently becomes one of their necessities: And what you reserve, cannot be so much your own, because it is over-plus to your Use every way, unless you put it to Interest, to that Company of *Beads-Men*: For, at the Instant you dispose it to them, the same is entered in the Day-Book of Heaven; and out of that Treasure, you shall be Repaid; and you shall find it, *After many Days*, infinitely multiply'd.

Observe how Nature communicates: The *Sun* out of his abundance of Light, gives a Largess of it to the *Moon*; *Lucinæ* gives Alms of the Light she receives to
the

the Earth, that is founded in Darkneſs : This *Earth*, having no Light to ſpare, freely imparts ſuch uſeful Matters, as ſhe carries, though of another Growth and Temper, to her ingrateful Inhabitants : The *Clouds* newly replenish'd with Rain, empty their Stores upon the parched Mountains ; they, diſcharging themſelves into the Rivers that over-flow, pay Tribute to the wide Ocean. *Nilus* and *Euphrates* are proud in ſwelling over their Banks to make the adjoining Meadows Fertile. The glutt'd *Bear* and *Tyger*, have ſometimes quitted their Prey to others half pined, and to Beaſts leſs Ravenous ; while the more Civiller Creatures of every Species have been famous in Story, for many tokens of Affection ; ſhewing how all things, from the higheſt to the loweſt, correſpond for a mutual Relief : Here and there is an accuſed *Shimei*, or a churliſh *Nabal* excepted ; that ſays, Who is *David* ? Talk not to me of the *King*, or the *Prophet* ; I know not that Man in the World, for whoſe ſake I would leſſen my Eſtate :
 Shall

Shall I take my *Bread*, and give it to Strangers? It is enough, *Churle*, that you know the Petitioners to be Men; and, that you may know, every Man is of more value, than a Mint of Gold and Silver: Would you loose a Man, for a Morsel of *Bread*? Shall I take my *Bread*, and give it away dost thou say? 'Tis thy *Bread* indeed, by the Favour of a better Master than thou art; but so, that it is not always, and every way thine. There is a certain Clause in the Conveyance, that speaks it thy *Bread* to Give, not thine to *with-hold*: 'Tis yours to *dispose of*, not to *detain*; the disposal of which, looks toward the *Communion of Saints* that is on Earth, with those in Heaven.

There is *Bread* of participation in every House, as the *Eucharistical Bread* is eminently such in Churches: And, for maintaining a Correspondence between Divine and Humane Love, and their Effects, we are taught to make daily Petitions: 'Tis you, *Miser*, that makes bold to change our Lord's Form of Prayer;

Prayer; calling that *Your Bread*, in your selfish Language, which is call'd *Our Bread*, in the Language of our Redeemer: And that is, and ought to be, the *Idiom* of all good Christians. Which word [*Our*] doth import a Christian Communication.

Shall I take my *Bread* and *Cast it upon the Waters*? How dare you put such a Question, *Impudent Man*, says St. *Ambrose*? What is thine but thy Sins? Did you command the *Earth* to nourish it? the *Clouds* to water it? the *Sun* to Ripen it? What was yours when you came into this World Mourning and Naked? What Silver and Gold did'st thou bring in thy Hands? What Furniture for a House? What Garments for a Covering? Your Pride, in such Questions, doth wrong to your Discretion; for all you possess, you have receiv'd. The Richest Heir must acknowledge himself beholding to the Rule of *Charity*. Here you found all at your Entrance, and Here you shall leave all at your Departure; you shall not

not carry with you so much, as is spent upon your *Obsequies*. All these things you so much covet and hoard, without asking your leave, will stay behind; unless you take this only sure way to make them yours, and carry them with you, by the preceeding Methods of *Charity*: That is a way, that will certainly convey your Lands and Goods to your future Use; which will at once, by Sanctifying them, dedicate them Eternally to your Service.

To secure those unjust Gettings of your *Ancestors*, and make such a firm Settlement of your Estate, as you desire to be made at the same time on your Posterity; you must take *Solomon's* Counsel; for so will it wear well, and endure many *Generations*.

Hear me farther: Is not he, that puts this Question, like the same Man, that, in a few late Years, got an Estate by *Fraud* and *Oppression*? And dare you say, Shall I *Cast my Bread upon the Waters*, when all the Goods you possess, may be so many private Wrongs, or publick

H

Grie:

Grievances? Call them no more *Thine*, for which you robb'd Innocents, stript Honest Men Naked, and forc'd others to Beggary. You say, Must a Man impoverish Himself, to relieve Strangers? You have a Family to maintain, Rents to pay, Farms to stock, and Houses to furnish; so that you set an Honest Care, in opposition to *Divine Charity*, and give the Servant the upper-hand of the Mistress; Whereas the Cœlestial Vertue, demands only what may be Spared, [τὴν κόσμησιν] such as are rather Ornaments and Complements of your Condition, than necessities, of Nature; tho' these also be required to save the Life of a publick Person of your dearest Friends, and nearest Relations.

But your State and Place require all you have, and more: Believe me, No! both Commands you to be Charitable: Your Honour is engaged by your Preferment, to do good according to your Title; whatever is absolutely necessary to your Person, is not to be sequestred by *Charity*, which calls for only so much

as may be spar'd from your Person, and your Dignity; for all that appertains to distressed Objects, is, as to you, Superfluous. Fear not, *Salomon* requires none of your Necessaries, but your Exceedings: He desires no prejudice to your Body, but to your Vices; and, seeking your Health, offers you means to prevent Diseases. Cannot you spare one Dish of Meat, one Loaf of Bread, one Coat from many, one Shilling opportunely, to keep Life in a poor Body.

Hear me, *Sir*, Feed more at your Gates, and fewer in your Mews, Kennels, and Stables; Consider how you disburse in needless Accoutrements, in Forreign Toys, in altering and furnishing your Houses. This Turret, that Cupolo might be spared; these Marble Columns, yonder Terras-Walks; these Thorough-Lights, them Tapistry Hangings; that Garnishing, those Orient Jewels, be mighty chargable: I could have spared much of this costly Pearl; and, with some of that, I would have eased some poor Tenants: I would have
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Impley'd some poor Labourers, Redeem'd some poor Captives; I would have Lodged and Victualled some poor Travellers; I would have set some poor Prisoners for Debt at Liberty; I would have placed some poor Orphans Apprentices; and have given Portions for the Marriage of some poor Maidens: Some Colledge, or School of good Literature, should have been Endowed; some Hospital Founded, &c. So should you make a competent Provision for your selves here, and hereafter acquire Mansions of Eternity: So should you live in favour of *God* and Man, and obtain that due Respect from your Neighbours, which your Avarice and Vanity now makes Counterfeit, by thus beginning to be Frugal at the wrong end; for *Charity* hath converted many Prodigals from Extravagant Courses; and, by making them Masters of themselves, hath made them Lord of great Estates; of which *Christian Vertue*, those only may complain, that have small Experience.

F I N I S.

